



The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens

Eva C. Keuls

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At once daring and authoritative, this book offers a profusely illustrated history of sexual politics in ancient Athens.

The phallus was pictured everywhere in ancient Athens: painted on vases, sculpted in marble, held aloft in gigantic form in public processions, and shown in stage comedies. This obsession with the phallus dominated almost every aspect of public life, influencing law, myth, and customs, affecting family life, the status of women, even foreign policy.

This is the first book to draw together all the elements that made up the "reign of the phallus"—men's blatant claim to general dominance, the myths of rape and conquest of women, and the reduction of sex to a game of dominance and submission, both of women by men and of men by men.

In her elegant and lucid text Eva Keuls not only examines the ideology and practices that underlay the reign of the phallus, but also uncovers an intense counter-movement—the earliest expressions of feminism and antimilitarism.

Complementing the text are 345 reproductions of Athenian vase paintings. Some have been reproduced in a larger format and gathered in an appendix for easy reference and closer study. These revealing illustrations are a vivid demonstration that classical Athens was more sexually polarized and repressive of women than any other culture in Western history.

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